



**USAID** | **ZAMBIA**  
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# COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR HEALTH (CSH) PROGRAMME

**THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND MOTHER AND  
CHILD HEALTH (MCDMCH) TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP CAPACITY  
ASSESSMENT**

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## Introduction

The Communications Support for Health (CSH) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has been mandated to strengthen the capacity of the National Health Promotion Technical Working Group (TWG). The National Health Promotion, the HIV/AIDS Information Education and Communication/Behaviour Change Communication (IEC/BCC), and the National Malaria IEC/BCC are the three main TWGs:

- The National Health Promotion TWG is convened by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Community Development and Maternal and Child Health (MCDMCH). This TWG is referred to as the MCDMCH TWG in this report.
- The HIV/AIDS IEC/BCC TWG is convened by the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC).
- The National Malaria IEC/BCC TWG is convened by the National Malaria Control Centre (NMCC).

In 2010, CSH conducted institutional assessments that included a baseline evaluation of the functioning of the IEC/BCC TWGs placed at MOH,<sup>1</sup> NAC, and NMCC. At the baseline, MCDMCH was still housed under MOH. The baseline evaluation of the TWGs revealed the need for strengthening TWG capacity to contribute to the review and development of evidence-based IEC/BCC tools. As of 2010, MOH did have a national TWG in place that coordinated the development and implementation of IEC/BCC interventions. Although a TWG was in place, it did not meet regularly. Further, MOH did not use any specific criteria for appointing TWG members; thus, in the absence of written criteria for the appointment of members, the appointments could be subjective, thereby rendering the TWG's decision-making less objective.

Based on the findings of the baseline evaluation, CSH, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), reviewed and updated the Terms of Reference (TORs) and selection criteria for the members of each TWG. CSH and GRZ developed guidelines for pre-testing and evaluating communication materials. CSH has also provided capacity-building support to TWG members by providing training to all members in behaviour-centred programming (BCP), which included formative research, materials development, pre-testing and evaluation, monitoring and evaluation of BCC programmes, and introduction of the CSH-developed gender analysis and strategy.

A midline evaluation in 2012 showed a revival of the TWGs. They had reviewed three nonroutine and seven routine campaigns and thus were close to reaching the project target of 12 campaigns. The TWGs had also convened 20 meetings on a quarterly basis, as well as ad hoc meetings, to review campaign materials. Additionally, other meetings were held with the members of the different TWGs on an ad hoc basis, depending on their needs as other routine campaigns were launched. Lastly, TORs for the TWGs were developed and approved; these TORs clarified the functions and role of the TWGs.

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<sup>1</sup> MCDMCH was formed in Zambia in 2013. The MOH National Health Promotion TWG was merged with those also serving in MCDMCH in 2013; thus, the baseline assessment reflects that of the National Health Promotion Unit within MOH in 2010.

To further improve the capacity of the members of each TWG, CSH trained a number of them in BCP to ensure that all members were aware of and understood the process for developing an effective BCC campaign.

To help measure progress towards the project's efforts in strengthening the Government line agencies' BCP TWGs, CSH conducted a final assessment with the members of the three TWGs, which focused on documenting the key successes and changes made because of CSH's support to the TWGs, assessing the capacity areas that still need to be built, and determining future plans for each TWG. The assessment was implemented using a focus group discussion (FGD) with TWG members. A semi-structured discussion guide was developed to lead the FGDs. This report documents findings from the MCDMCH TWG capacity assessment.

### *Objectives of the Assessment*

#### **Main Objective**

The main objective of the assessment exercise was to assess how the CSH project's support has affected the functioning of the MCDMCH TWG since 2012, when CSH began supporting the TWGs.

#### **Specific Objectives**

Specifically, the assessment sought to

- Assess how well the MCDMCH TWG is functioning (e.g., Is the TWG meeting on a regular basis? What is the participation of the different TWG members? Are they fulfilling/achieving the TORs?);
- Assess how useful the TWG materials (e.g., TORs and guidelines for pre-testing and evaluating communication materials) have been in carrying out the work of the TWG;
- Assess the perceived usefulness of the TWG in contributing to the development of IEC/BCC materials;
- Investigate how the IEC/BCC capacity of the individual TWG members changed over the course of CSH's support;
- Determine the plans of the TWG at the end of the CSH project; and
- Find out what needs to be improved to further enhance the capacity of the TWG and its members.

### **Methodology**

CSH conducted an FGD with four key members of the MCDMCH TWG for the assessment. The FGD was held immediately following one of the TWG's quarterly meetings. CSH Research, Monitoring and Evaluation staff members facilitated the discussion using a facilitator guide developed around the above research questions. The embedded CSH (BCC advisor for MCDMCH/MOH) staff were also amongst the TWG members interviewed. The transcribed FGD was then analysed for emergent themes and patterns and forms the basis of this report. The assessment was conducted on 31 Oct. 2014, at Tuskers Hotel in Kabwe, Central Province. The assessment FGD lasted slightly less than one hour.

## Findings

The findings from the assessment are organised around the key research areas: functioning of the MCDMCH TWG, usefulness of the CSH-developed materials for the TWG, perceived usefulness of the TWG, perceived changes due to the capacity-building efforts of individual TWG members, and areas for improvement to enhance the capacity of the TWG and its members as well as the TWG's sustainability.

### *Functioning of the TWG*

Focus group participants stated that the chief health promotion officer is the chair of the TWG. The MCDMCH TWG consists of members representing various groups, including MCDMCH, MOH, UNICEF, and other key stakeholders groups. FGD participants stated that UNICEF has currently been given chairmanship of the group, with CSH as the secretariat. In discussing the functionality of the group, participants described CSH's role as critical. CSH provided logistical support, as one participant stated:

*CSH has been the pillar...in terms of organising all the logistics and also aiding in the process of calling all the meetings and therefore for all terms of reference for the TWG, CSH has spearheaded, they would lead.... We appreciate the terms of reference. Whenever there was a need to fulfil certain aspects, they [CSH] have that done with all the members present.*

Despite accomplishing their goal of holding all meetings and acknowledging the effectiveness of the TORs, FGD participants identified scheduling meetings as the biggest challenge. As one participant stated, *It has been very effective, but [the] difficulty is scheduling the meetings because sometimes the members have different activities on their calendars and we have to reschedule.* Although there were scheduling conflicts, which at times limited participation, respondents from the FGD stated that most organisations working on health promotion were active members of the TWG. Further, participants thought the members would do their best to attend the scheduled meetings.

A recommendation made for improving the functioning of the TWG, specifically regarding scheduling, was to put the meetings on the Government's action plan and change them to standing meetings. As one respondent stated:

*If there is an activity that is also put in the Government's action plan, it means everyone will look at it and say we are supposed to have this at this time. Some are standing activities. Like the first week or the second week of a certain month of the quarter—they will know to apportion time.*

Another major accomplishment in the functionality of the TWG is having the TORs, which have allowed TWG members to review materials and provide feedback. As one FGD participant stated:

*Now having the TOR in hand—there has also been training of other TWG members at central level and subnational levels. With the tools to review the material ... [we] have also been able to go around and do some supervision.*

As illustrated in the above quotation, strides have been made, yet one participant noted that there is still some need for improvement and strengthening, particularly at the subnational levels.

### *Usefulness of CSH-Developed Materials*

Participants described several aspects in which the materials and guidelines developed by CSH have been useful. These promoted the ability to pre-test and review materials by utilising pre-established guidelines, thus allowing TWG members to produce materials to meet the specified standards and build capacity at the provincial levels. The following quotations by FGD participants highlight their views on the utility of CSH-developed materials:

*The guidelines for development and pre-testing are very useful; has helped us produce evidence-based materials that are acceptable. We have been able to pre-test whatever material has been produced. We have been going through the steps laid down in the guidelines; that has been very useful. It has also built capacity in us.*

*The guidelines are, to us, reference materials that make us do the perfect development and production of IEC materials. Before that, it was difficult and sometimes some materials were not acceptable due to one element or another, but with the coming of and development of those guidelines, it has made sure all the materials that are produced are really according to the specified standards.*

*For me, it's the vigilance that the lower levels, the provincial district levels, have had. You find that especially for the districts, you don't have the actual health promoters—these are just officers from other programmes, who are like focal points; but because there are guidelines and they have been oriented on how to use them, any material that comes in is scrutinised, and that's why if there is a substandard material or material that is not culturally unacceptable in their area comes in, they won't use it; they'll just file it. So it's been very useful.*

Because of the TWG, respondents found an increase in the quality of the materials and products being disseminated. FGD participants also mentioned that by gaining the skills to be able to conduct formative research and assessments, they are now able to objectively review the materials that MDCMCH is producing. Materials and guidelines on the utilisation of materials were also useful for members at the subnational levels. Members of the TWG at the subnational levels were also able to utilise the guidelines to review material to make sure that they were appropriate for members in their community, which was previously not always the case.

### *Perceived Usefulness of the TWG*

In discussing the changes that have occurred since the formation of the TWG, FGD participants noted overwhelmingly positive results. As one participant stated:

*... before we had a formalised working group, things were done ad hoc most of the times; as health promoters, we would come together maybe if there was campaign that needed to be prepared. From the time we came together and developed the TOR, formed the technical working groups and subtechnical working groups, things have been done in an orderly manner.... [D]uring the quarterly meetings, we are able to discuss issues and review what has happened ... and it's from this that other programmes have been formed.*

Participants described the support from CSH and other partners as useful, since previously there were no TORs or guidelines for production, pre-testing, and evaluation of IEC materials. Further, because of the TWG, respondents noted changes in processes and procedures that now have community-level impact. For example, one participant attributed part of the success of *Your Health Matters*<sup>2</sup> to the TWG.

Another way in which the TWG was useful was in the expansion of the professional networks. FGD participants stated that the TWG provided them with a larger pool of people from which they could rely on for assistance with events and activities. In instances where they were travelling to another district to conduct an activity, TWG members were able to gain assistance from other TWG members in that specific district.

The TWG has also played a critical role in contributing to the national campaigns. According to participants, the TWG changed the way that campaigns and commemorations are conducted. The TWG can come up with different ideas and innovations, which can then add value to the various campaigns and commemorations. Due to these innovative ideas, the TWG has facilitated moving beyond the traditional way of doing things, and FGD participants now see greater impact at the community level. Participants emphasised that these changes have led to more effective ways of reaching people at the community level. One participant described the greater reach to the community in the following way:

*We also changed the way commemorations are done. It was traditional now ... the coordinating groups are able to come up with new ideas and innovation to add impact [of these] commemoration ... not like the traditional and usual [ones]; the service and impact is felt by the community so the community is benefitting more.*

### **Capacity Building of TWG Members**

In addition to the usefulness of the TWG and the CSH-supported materials, FGD participants discussed the TWG as being instrumental in building the capacity of its members. Members can now serve as resources for other members. As one respondent stated:

*Capacity has been built. I can comfortably start from the national level and go down to the province level; I know that I can pick on someone there [at the province] who I can go work with, which was not the case before. And this is not necessarily someone from Ministry of Health, but a member of the technical working group, that I can easily work with.*

FGD participants acknowledged that they had seen a noticeable increase in knowledge, specifically related to IEC/BCC, since the formation of the TWG.

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<sup>2</sup> *Your Health Matters, Let's Talk* is a 25-minute TV communications programme supported by CSH. The programme focuses on selected health priority areas and highlights testimonials from the community to raise awareness on that particular health issue. Twelve programmes have been produced and aired on national television. The same programmes have now been translated into seven local languages and reformatted into radio.

*... I think when you look at the TWG, it's not a stand-alone aspect. We have aspects of general capacity building. People have had capacity built to understand that materials development is not an ad hoc thing; you need to follow steps. A lot of people have been trained in formative research, and we have been able to do some type of research and assessment before disseminating information.*

Sustainability was also discussed as something that the TWG needs to be cognisant of and should strive to accomplish. As one FGD participant stated:

*We need to constantly remind ourselves that we have this responsibility. It's not easy to bring different people from different institutions to form a technical working group. We need to do a lot of ground work ... so that sustainability and motivation is very important within ourselves .... [W]e have to work at it ....*

FGD participants acknowledged the importance of continuing the TWG and stated that it would be a disservice to not sustain the TWG. They expressed that the knowledge that has been built within people through the TWG is an important start and that advocacy for Government support was a possible way to continue moving forward. Further, they thought that sustainability would be possible, because the TWG built upon the social mobilisation that was previously established, and thus the need for such a forum has always been apparent. Additionally, because the institutions that make up the TWG are well established, continuation can be easily facilitated, especially through teamwork.

## Challenges, Successes, and Recommendations

Challenges discussed by FGD participants included

- The limited number of technicians, specifically graphic designers, and equipment to facilitate the production of materials;
- The lack of an established formalised process with the dissemination of the review criteria for materials and information to all partners; and
- The scheduling and maintenance of the TWG.

Regarding successes, FGD participants stated that

- The skills of TWG members have been enhanced by interaction with other members,
- TWG members have been able to network and understand the scope of the programmes being implemented across the country,
- Members are able to learn from different partners, and
- TWG members have a sense of ownership of the TWG.

FGD participants gave several recommendations that would help improve the functionality and lead to the sustainability of the TWG. These included the following needs:

- Secure funding and resources so that, even without a partner, TWG members are able to continue with their activities;
- Have electronic documentation of information and guidelines for future development, dissemination, and potential modifications;
- Conduct a mapping of the various health promotion activities and at which levels they are being performed in order to facilitate the distribution of materials;



- Form a health promotion association to which the TWG members can belong; this association can serve as the mechanism and also as a think tank to facilitate growth and the coordination of activities;
- Continue to strengthen the TWG at the subnational levels;
- Continue to train TWG members in order to fill gaps caused by member turnover; and
- Gather all the technical people working in IEC/BCC to reduce the need to outsource.

## Conclusion

Overall, since 2012, the functioning of the MCDMCH TWG has greatly improved. This assessment highlighted the instrumental role that CSH played in improving the utility and functionality of the TWG. The establishment of the TORs, as well as the availability of guidelines and tools to review IEC/BCC materials, was a key success. With these resources, TWG members were able to fulfil their mandate of developing and reviewing high-quality IEC/BCC materials. The reach of the TWG is immeasurable, as members describe the group as spearheading changes in IEC/BCC materials and interventions at both the national and the subnational levels. Members of the TWG have a strong drive to continue to improve the group even after the CSH project ends.

## Technical Work Group Capacity Assessment:

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

Good morning/afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I will be conducting today's focus group discussion. I'm part of the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Team of Communication Support for Health (CSH).

Today, we're going to discuss how your Technical Working Group (TWG) has changed over the course of CSH's providing the group with support. We hope that this information will help us to better understand how CSH's support has affected the functioning of the TWG and built the capacity of the group and its members to contribute to the development and approval of IEC/BCC materials and activities.

I am a trained focus group moderator. I want to hear your honest opinions about the topics we will discuss today. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions I'm going to ask. Please just relax and enjoy the discussion.

Please keep in mind that your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. If for any reason you wish to leave the discussion, you may do so.

I am accompanied by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, who will be responsible for note taking and logistics, respectively.

Before we begin, I'd like to review some rules or guidelines for today's discussion. These rules are our guidelines for operating so that we can complete our task in a manner that is respectful and provides you with the opportunity to express your thoughts safely and confidentially.

- You have been invited here to offer your experiences, views, and opinions.
- Again, there are no right or wrong answers.
- It's okay to be critical. I want to hear your views and opinions about whether you like or dislike something you see or hear.
- This session will be audio taped. This allows us to capture everything that is being said today, and we will include the information in a report to our client.
- There will be observers from CSH.
- All of your answers will be confidential, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. Nothing will be attributed to any particular person in our report.
- You may excuse yourself from the conversation at any time for any reason.
- Lastly, please turn off the ringers on your mobile phone.

Do you have any questions at this time?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

## **I. Functioning of the TWG**

In the first part of our discussion, we're going to talk about how well the TWG has been functioning since it began meeting in 2012.

1. How often does the TWG meet?
  - Does the TWG meet on a regular basis?
  - When did the TWG begin meeting as you described?
2. What organisation chairs the TWG?
  - How effective is this structure?
  - Would another type of organisation or specific organisation be better suited to chair the TWG?
3. How effective is the process of scheduling the meetings?
  - Who schedules them?
  - Are there any issues that make scheduling meetings difficult?
  - How can the process of scheduling meetings be improved?
4. How many of your members normally come to the meetings?
  - Are there any members or organisations that are commonly not joining meetings?
  - Are there any members or organisations that do not take an active role in providing feedback on IEC/BCC activities/materials?
5. To what extent do you think the TWG is fulfilling its Terms of Reference?
  - What components of the Terms of Reference are the TWG not fulfilling? Why?

## **II. Usefulness of CSH-Developed Materials**

Now, we're going to discuss the usefulness of materials that CSH helped produce in coordination with the TWG. These materials include the TWG's Terms of Reference and the Guidelines for Pre-Testing and Evaluating Communication Materials.

Let's begin with the Terms of Reference.

6. In general, how helpful is the Terms of Reference to the functioning of the TWG?
  - How helpful is it in defining the role of the TWG in contributing to the developing of IEC/BCC activities/materials?
  - How helpful is it in defining the roles of the members?
7. How can the Terms of Reference be improved?

Now, let's move on to the Guidelines for Pre-Testing and Evaluating Communication Materials.

8. How useful have the guidelines been in facilitating the review of communication materials?
  - Did the guidelines make the review process easier?
9. How did the use of the guidelines affect the quality of the IEC/BCC materials?
  - Can you provide some examples of how the guidelines are affecting the quality of the materials?
10. How can the guidelines be improved?

### **III. Perceived Usefulness of the TWG**

We're now going to talk about how the TWG has contributed to IEC/BCC activities since CSH began providing support to the TWG.

11. Overall, how has the TWG changed the process of reviewing and developing IEC/BCC activities/materials since CSH's support?
  - How has the newly formed TWG affected the quality of the activities/materials?
  - How has the TWG made the process of reviewing and developing activities/materials more efficient?
12. Can you provide some examples of what the TWG has helped develop for specific IEC/BCC campaigns and smaller activities?
  - How do you think the current functioning of the TWG affected the group's ability to produce these materials? To manage/implement IEC/BCC campaigns/activities?

### **FOR THE NATIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION TWG ONLY:**

13. How effective is the TWG in providing support to other TWGs through trainings and orientation to IEC/BCC materials and activities?
  - How can the TWG improve these efforts?
14. How effective is the TWG in facilitating discussions and networking with other relevant groups to enhance the implementation of IEC/BCC materials and activities?
  - How can the TWG improve these efforts?
15. How effective is the TWG in leveraging resources to increase coverage and reach of IEC/BCC materials and activities?
  - How can the TWG improve these efforts?

16. How effective is the TWG in providing guidance to partners on how to evaluate IEC/BCC materials and activities?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

**FOR THE HIV/AIDS IEC/BCC TWG ONLY:**

17. How effective is the TWG in supporting NAC IEC/BCC units to identify, plan, monitor, and evaluate IEC/BCC activities?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

18. How effective is the TWG in supporting provinces and districts to establish and strengthen IEC/BCC interventions?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

19. How effective is the TWG in documenting best practices and publishing in peer-reviewed journals?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

20. How effective is the TWG in strengthening its partnerships by sharing knowledge and leveraging resources to implement IEC/BCC activities?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

21. How effective is the TWG in supporting the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS IEC/BCC activities across the country?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

**FOR THE MALARIA IEC/BCC TWG ONLY:**

22. How effective is the TWG in supporting the NMCC health promotion section to identify, plan, monitor, and evaluate IEC/BCC activities?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

23. How effective is the TWG in supporting provinces and districts to establish and strengthen IEC/BCC interventions?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

24. How effective is the TWG in documenting best practices and publishing in peer-reviewed journals?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

25. How effective is the TWG in strengthening its partnerships by sharing knowledge and leveraging resources to implement IEC/BCC activities?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

26. How effective is the TWG in supporting the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS IEC/BCC activities across the country?

- How can the TWG improve these efforts?

**FOR ALL TWGS:**

27. What are some of the remaining barriers for the TWG in contributing to IEC/BCC in an effective and efficient way that we haven't already discussed?

**IV. Capacity Building of Members**

We'll now talk about how the ability of the members to contribute to the development of IEC/BCC activities has changed over the course of CSH's support.

28. What CSH trainings have you participated in?

- Behaviour-centred programming?
- Formative research?
- Monitoring and evaluation?

29. How do you think each of these trainings has built your knowledge and skills needed to contribute to the development of IEC/BCC activities/materials?

30. How do you think participating in meetings with colleagues from other organisations and with different levels of IEC/BCC has built your knowledge and skills needed to contribute to the development of IEC/BCC activities/materials?

31. Are there any specific skills/knowledge that you feel you need to have developed further in order to better contribute to the development and review IEC/BCC activities? If so, which ones?

**V. Plans for the Future**

Let's discuss the plans for the TWG and how the TWG will use and supplement materials and protocol CSH has helped put into place.

32. From your point of view, how sustainable is the TWG?

- Does the TWG currently have or plan to develop a sustainability workplan? If so, what kind of issues will be covered in the workplan?

33. How sustainable is the funding for the TWG?

- What funding challenges has the TWG encountered in the past?
- How will the TWG plan to address these challenges and ensure sufficient funding for the TWG?

34. What are the plans for the TWG meetings?
- Will it continue to meet as it does now?
35. How will the TWG plan to use the Terms of Reference?
- Will the TWG continue to use the Terms of Reference?
  - Will the TWG make any changes to the Terms of Reference? If so, what changes?
36. How will the TWG plan to use the Guidelines for Pre-Testing and Evaluating Communication Materials?
- Will the TWG continue to use the guidelines?
  - Will the TWG make any changes to the guidelines? If so, what changes?
37. Does the TWG plan to develop any additional materials to assist in the functioning of the TWG? Which ones?
38. How will the TWG handle the training of its members in topics related to IEC/BCC communications?
- Hold additional trainings? In what topics?
  - Train new members?

## **VI. Needs for Improvement**

Moving on to the last part of our discussion, we'll focus on areas in need of improvement to further build the capacity of the TWG to contribute to IEC/BCC activities.

39. Other than what we have already discussed, do you have any recommendations on how to improve the functioning of the TWG and the ability of its members to effectively contribute to IEC/BCC activities?
- More guidelines for reviewing materials?
  - More trainings?
  - Better coordination and participation for reviewing and developing materials?
  - Add a role or function to the group's mandate?

## **VII. False Close**

Please give me one moment, as I leave the room to check to see if my colleagues have any further questions.

## **VIII. Closing**

**[Ask any additional questions provided by the Capacity-Building Team.]**

Thank you for joining us today for the focus group. We really appreciate your time and input.